

Message Text

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ACTION AF-06

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FM AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6594

INFO AMCONSUL ASMARA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

US MISSION USUN NY 1745

C O N F I D E N T I A L ADDIS ABABA 11898

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, ET, US

SUBJECT: THE ETHIOPIAN ROYAL FAMILY: STATUS REPORT

REF: STATE 237218 AND PREVIOUS (NOTAL)

1. THE EMBASSY SUBMITS HERewith INFORMATION OBTAINED FROM SOURCES BELIEVED RELIABLE AND WITH ACCESS, ON THE SITUATION OF KEY MEMBERS OF THE FORMER ETHIOPIAN ROYAL FAMILY. THE EMBASSY RECOMMENDS THAT THIS INFORMATION BE QNDLED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE DEPT'S INSTRUCTIONS SET FORTH IN REFTEL WHICH DEPT MAY WISH REPEAT TO ASMARA.

2. PRINCESSES TENAGNE WORQ HAILE SELASSIE, YESHASHE WORK YILMA, SARAH GIZAW, IJIGAYEHU ASFAW WOSSEN, AIDA DESTA, HIRUT (RUTH) DESTA, SEBLE DESTA, SPHIA DESTA AND ZURIASH WORQ ARE IN AKAKI PRISON IN DOWNTOWN ADDIS.

3. ZURIASH WORK'S DAUGHTER IS ABROAD AS ARE PRINCESS AIDA DESTA'S SONS. PRINCESS MAHALSANTE HABTE MARIAM THE WIFE OF THE LATE EMPEROR'S LATE SON SAHLE SELASSIE IS SAID TO BE IN LONDON WITH HER SON ERMIAS. PRINCESS METAFARIASH WORQ REMAINS THERE WITH HER HUSBAND, THE
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CROWN PRINCE. RAS ANDERGACHEW, HUSBAND OF PRINCESS

TENAGNE WORQ IS ALSO THERE. REPORTEDLY PRINCE ZARAH YACOB ASFAW WOSSEN IS BACK IN SCHOOL IN ENGLAND. DEJ. MERID BEYENE, PRINCESS ROMAN'S CHILD IS BELIEVED TO BE IN LONDON BUT LIJ SEBESTE SAMPSON IS REPORTEDLY HERE WITH HIS MOTHER WHO HAD BEEN UNDER DETENTION BUT WAS RELEASED. DEJ. ZEWDE GEBRE SELASSIE'S MOTHER PRINCESS WELLETE ISRAELE SEYOUM IS IN ADDIS AT LIBERTY. PRINCESS SEBLE'S DAUGHTER ELISABETH AND AIDA SELASSIE, AUGHTER OF AIDA DESTA, ARE ALSO HERE STAYING WITH WOLDE KASSA'S SISTER. PRINCESS IGIGAYEHU'S CHILDREN, SAMPSON FIKRE HABTE MARIAM, RAHEL FIKRE HABTE MARIAM AND MEHRET FIKRE HABTE MARIAM AND MEHRET FIKRE HABTE MARIAM (A ROYAL GALLA LINE) ARE WITH THEIR FATHER IN WOLLEGA AND/OR ON ZAMETCHA.

4. WE UNDERSTAND THAT FOUR OUT OF THE FIVE SONS OF THE LATE DUKE OF HARAR ARE IMPRISONED IN MENELIK PALACE (THE "OLD GHIBBI") IN DOWNTOWN ADDIS ABABA. THEY ARE: PRINCE WOSSEN SEGED ("PAUL"), AMDE IYASUS MAKONNEN HAILE SELASSIE ("MICHAEL"), TEFFERRI MAKONNEN ("PHILIP") AND BAEDE MARIAM MAKONNEN PRINCE MAKONNEN MAKONNEN ("DAWIT") IS ABROAD, PRESUMABLY IN LONDON. ASRATE KASSA'S SONS BY PRINCESS ZERIAH WORQ ARE ALSO DETAINED IN THE OLD GHIBBY VIZ. ASFAW WOSSEN ASRATE, MULUGETA ASRATE AND KASSA ASRATE. HIS DAUGHTERS WOIZERIT (MISS) IREBKA ASRATE AND TIRU WORQ ASRATE ARE SAID TO BE JAILED WITH THE PRINCESSES.

5. ACCORDING TO A POLITICAL PRISONER RELEASED JUST PRIOR TO THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION OF ETHIOPIA'S REVOLUTION AND WHO WAS DETAINED WITH THE PRINCES THEY ARE ALL IN GOOD HEALTH. THEY RISE EARLY; WASH AND CLEAN THEIR ROOMS; ARE ALLOWED OUTSIDE FOR A FIRST AIRING FROM 0930 TO 1030 HOURS; LUNCH BETWEEN 1100 AND 1300 HOURS; HAVE A SIESTA; TAKE INSTRUCTION IN SUBJECTS OF THEIR CHOICE FROM FELLOW INMATES BETWEEN 1530 AND 1730; DINE BETWEEN 1730 AND 1830; HAVE ANOTHER HOUR'S OUTING THEREAFTER AND ARE RETURNED TO THEIR PLACES OF DETENTION AND LOCKED IN FOR THE NIGHT AT 8:00 P.M. THEY ARE KEPT IN TWO GROUPS WHICH MAY JOIN DURING THE DAY'S ACTIVITY BUT ARE IMPRISONED IN DIFFERENCE ROOMS.

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6. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE PRINCESSES HELD IN AKAKI JAIL FEEL THEY ARE BETTER OFF THERE THAN THEY WERE TOWARDS THE END OF THEIR DETENTION IN THE FORMER WOSSEN SEGED COMPOUND NEXT TO THIS EMBASSY. THIS IS, AT LEAST, WHAT PRINCESS AIDA IS SAID TO HAVE TOLD A VISITOR, HERSELF OF NOBLE LINEAGE, WHO IS PERMITTED TO VISIT HER EVERY SUNDAY (EXCEPT LAST TWO WEEKS -- REASON UNKNOWN). THIS IS BECAUSE THE PRINCESSES WERE MOVED INTO SUCCESSIVELY SMALLER

QUARTERS ON THE WOSSEN SEGED COMPOUND UNTIL THEY ENDED UP IN INTOLERABLY CROWDED CONDITIONS WITHIN A SMALL DEPENDENCY OF PRINCE PAUL'S PALACE. IN AKAKI JAIL THEY ARE SAID TO BE DETAINED IN A SEPARATE BUILDING WHERE ALL OF THEM ARE BEING HELD TOGETHER. NEVERTHELESS, THIS "BUILDING" ASSERTEDLY PROVIDES THEM WITH MORE ROOM THAN THEY PREVIOUSLY ENJOYED. MOREOVER, ALTHOUGH THEY ARE KEPT SEPARATED FROM OTHER INMATES WITHIN THEIR PRISON COMPOUND THEY CAN SPEAK WITH THEIR FELLOW DE-TAINEES ACROSS THE FENCE AND THIS, UNDERSTANDABLY, IS SAID TO BE A GREAT COMFORT TO THEM.

7. FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF RAS ASRATE KASSA THE PRINCESSES ARE SAID TO HAVE CUT THEIR OWN HAIR AS CUSTOM DEMANDS. WHILE IT HAS GROWN OUT SINCE THEN IT IS STILL RELATIVELY SHORT. THE PRINCESSES ARE BELIEVED TO BE IN REASONABLY GOOD PHYSICAL CONDITION ALTHOUGH THE MARK OF THEIR IMPRISONMENT IS UPON THEIR FACES AND THEY HAVE LOST WEIGHT. PRINCESS SARAH IS SAID TO HAVE THE STRONGEST MORALE OF THE LOT. THE PRINCESSES REPORTEDLY HAVE NO HOPE OR EXPECTATION OF BEING RELEASED IN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE. UNDERSTANDABLY THEIR PSYCHOLOGICAL STATE IS NOT GOOD.

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